

OPRD reminds visitors, coast residents to be safe on beaches

The arrival of spring brings many visitors to the Oregon coast, and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) wants visitors and residents to be safe while exploring the shoreline.

“March can be a tricky time of year on the coast,” said Lisa Stevenson, OPRD beach ranger speaking at Cape Kiwanda State Natural Area. “The ocean can still experience stormy win-

ter weather despite the warmer temperatures on land.”

Coastal threats can come in the form of powerful waves, unstable logs on beaches and erosion of rocks and cliffs.

“People are so excited for the spring sunshine that sometimes safety takes a back seat,” said Stevenson. “But preparation and common sense go a long way to keeping you safe on the

coast.”

Stevenson listed several tips for ensuring a safe excursion on the coast:

- Always keep one eye on the ocean so you won't be caught off guard if a bigger wave surges up the beach.

These “sneaker waves” are unpredictable, powerful and especially dangerous for children.

- Stay away from logs on the wet sand or in the surf. These logs can

weigh several tons and can be moved by only a few inches of water. The ocean is strong enough to pick up even the biggest log and roll it over you.

- Know when the tide is coming in, especially when exploring tidepools. It's easy to become stranded by the incoming tide when your attention is elsewhere.

You can keep track of tides with a tide table; OPRD park rangers and

many local businesses can give you one for free.

- Be careful on cliffs and rocks. They can be unstable due to erosion. Stay on marked trails and do not climb over fences. Both are there to keep you safe.

For more Oregon coast safety information, watch the new Cape Kiwanda safety video on the Oregon State Parks YouTube page.

2018 SPRING WHALE WATCHING WEEK SET TO BEGIN SATURDAY

Gray whales are migrating north past the Oregon coast and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) invites visitors to share the excitement during Spring Whale Watch Week March 24-31.

Trained volunteers from the Whale Watching Spoken Here program will be stationed 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. each day at 24 sites along the coast, ready to help people spot the migrating marine mammals.

The Whale Watching Center in Depoe Bay will be open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. Visitors to the center can enjoy interactive whale exhibits and take in the panoramic ocean views. Binoculars are provided.

OPRD rangers will also be on hand to answer questions about the whales. A live stream of whale activity off of Depoe Bay returns this spring too; watch it on the Oregon State Parks YouTube channel at

www.youtube.com/user/OregonParks. A map of the 24 volunteer whale watch sites can be found on whalespoken.org. Visit oregonstateparks.org for information about coast parks and campgrounds.

Nesting season for western plover restricts some beach beaches

Beachgoers are urged to help recovery efforts of the threatened western snowy plover by respecting nesting areas and beach restrictions during nesting season, March 15 through Sept. 15.

Beachgoers will see signs and ropes that identify sensitive plover nesting areas and list restrictions, including dogs (even on a leash), vehicles, kites, drones, camping and fires.

“We're making great strides in reversing the downward slide of this species,” said Cindy Burns, Siuslaw National Forest wildlife biologist. “But it takes all of us, so we urge people to do their part to understand nesting season rules and to share the beach this spring and summer.”

These federally protected shorebirds nest on open sand along Oregon's beaches. Nests, and especially chicks, are well-camouflaged. During nesting season, human disturbances can flush adult plovers away from their nests as they attempt to defend their young from the perceived predator. Left alone too long, eggs or chicks can die



ODFW PHOTO

The western snowy plover nest along the Oregon shoreline from mid-March through mid-September.

On these plover beaches, the dry sand and dunes are closed to all access — except along official trails and on the wet sand — to protect eggs and chicks. Visitors may see roped off areas within these plover management areas, which serve to protect the most sensitive habitat; however, all dry sand on both sides of the rope is closed.

Wet sand areas on plover beaches remain open to foot and equestrian traffic. All other recreation is off limits, include walking your dog (even on

a leash), driving a vehicle, riding a bicycle, camping, fires, and flying kites or drones.

“Visitors will have access to hundreds of miles of beaches without these seasonal restrictions,” said Laurel Hillmann, Ocean Shores Specialist for Oregon State Parks. “By planning your trip, you can enjoy the coast and help keep this sensitive bird safe.”

Several land managers oversee beach activity for plover

from exposure, predators or people.

Recreation restrictions occur in designated plover management areas, small stretches of beach along the entire coastline where plovers are nesting or could potentially nest. These areas collectively comprise about 40 miles of Oregon's 362 miles of shoreline. Detailed maps can be found on the Oregon State Parks website (www.bit.ly/wsplover).

protection, particularly the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed western snowy plovers as a threatened species

in 1993. Habitat loss from invasive plants — as well as human disturbances, including litter and discarded food scraps that attract predators — have contributed to the birds' decline.

The Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative (www.saveoregondunes.org/) is

working with land managers to develop and implement a restoration strategy as well as raise public awareness about the need to restore the dunes ecosystem for snowy plover, rare plants and animals, and the unique recreation opportunities offered here.

SBSA from 1B

building the new softball program.

“SBSA softball provides a positive and safe environment for girls ages 10 to 18 in Florence and the surrounding areas to participate in healthy competition, develop athletic skills and build self-esteem while learning to play the game of fast pitch softball,” the SBSA mission statement reads. “The program seeks to develop fast pitch softball players; not only in terms of their skills, but also build their self-esteem and confidence.

Girls are encouraged to challenge both their physical and mental abilities, but to also become better than they could ever imagine.”

The softball program's initial sponsors include R&R King Logging, Leisure Excavating, BJ's Ice Cream and West Coast Autobody.



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ATHLETE
OF THE
WEEK

Ryan Rendon-Padilla
Senior



TRACK & FIELD

Siuslaw H.S. TRACK & FIELD
Highlight: Ryan Rendon-Padilla is Coast Radio Sport's Athlete of the Week. Ryan took first place and set a personal record in the Javelin this past week with a throw of 167 ft 6 in. The fifth best throw in school history.

Honorable Mention
Brea Blankenship
Highlight: Honorable mention goes to Brea Blankenship who scored a victory in the 800m with a time of 2:41.51

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